

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

211233Z Jun 05

C O N F I D E N T I A L YEREVAN 001084

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR EUR/CACEN, IO, DRL

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/21/2015

TAGS: PHUM PREL KUNR AM

SUBJECT: DEMARCHE DELIVERED: REFORMING THE UN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

REF: A. A) STATE 111657

1B. B) YEREVAN 997

Classified By: DCM A.F.Godfrey for reasons 1.4 (b,d).

11. (C) Post delivered reftel talking points to MFA International Organizations Department Chief Valery Mkrtumyan on June 21. Mkrtumyan said that the GOAM supports the idea of a standing, solutions-oriented council. He warned, however, that most of our points would require additional "deliberation" beyond the current timeframe. (Note: Armenia developed its policy on UN reform in Yerevan during a conclave of senior diplomats in Yerevan May 30-31 (reftel B). End Note.) Mkrtumyan asserted the GOAM supports obligatory peer review that "carefully examines" member nations and provides the "effective action" human rights mandate. He said he had raised the issue with Minister of Foreign Affairs Vartan Oskanian and that Yerevan was engaged in detailed discussions on the subject with its missions in Geneva and New York.

12. (C) Mkrtumyan said the GOAM supports a Human Rights Council membership structure that follows the membership guidelines of the Security Council or ECOSOC. On total membership, however, he disagreed with our points. In response to the proposal that the council should have twenty members he responded, "We do not share the U.S. view that membership should be limited to twenty; we want equitable and geographic distribution of representation, although we will try to be flexible." After some prodding, it became clear that the MFA was suggesting that the council have no fewer than the current 53 members who are part of the UNHRC. Mkrtumyan also said the GOAM supports restrictions on "concurrent membership in the major structures," limiting any country from holding a seat on the Security Council, ECOSOC and the proposed Human Rights Council at the same time. He agreed that this might not be a realistic scenario for countries (like the US and EU countries) who are active in all three areas, but suggested nonetheless that the GOAM would stick to this point during upcoming discussions.

13. (C) Comment: Mkrtumyan's response confirms our suspicion that the GOAM is approaching UN reform issues in terms of how small countries -- like Armenia -- can retain seats on important UN bodies. Mkrtumyan felt compelled to make a connection between the issue of UNHRC reform and discussions surrounding the UNSC. Since Yerevan has traditionally deferred to its mission in Geneva on these issues, a firm USG approach in Geneva will be necessary if we are to move them closer to our position on the technical aspects of this subject.

EVANS